

# **Delaware's Council on Farm and Food Policy to advise Secretary of Agriculture**

DOVER, Del. – After a year-long community planning process led by the Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA), the newly formed Delaware Council on Farm and Food Policy will facilitate access to resources that will allow all Delawareans to circumvent challenges associated with securing nutritious and local food options, minimizing deficiency and vulnerability within communities, and achieving healthy lifestyles. The Council will advise Delaware's Secretary of Agriculture on policy, project development, resource priorities, and implementation strategies to achieve its goal.

"In a state our size, there is an opportunity to draw real connections between the unique and varied opportunities within each of Delaware's three counties," said Nikko Brady, DDA Deputy Principal Assistant. "The value of a council like this is its capacity to pioneer a model for influencing statewide community prosperity by capitalizing on our cornerstone industry – agriculture."

Created from a combination of on-the-ground learning and government resources and planning, the Delaware Council on Farm and Food Policy sets the tone for statewide collaboration, evidence-based project development, and connecting Delaware grown products within our communities. This diverse group of field experts will provide insight and recommendations, drive new opportunities for program and policy development, and examine opportunities that may already be well underway and need additional collective support.

"We have learned a lot this past year through our strategic conversations



Delaware grown summer produce includes healthy choices such as sweet corn, tomatoes, peaches, and blueberries.

including growers, producers, community members, businesses, non-profit leaders, public health advocates and so many individuals committed to advancing Delaware's top priorities surrounding food and farming," said Secretary of Agriculture Michael T. Scuse. "I am excited to work with the Council, under the leadership of David Edgell, to witness the changes in policy that will positively impact Delawareans by ensuring they have access to healthy, affordable food produced by the very best family farms in this country."

Together, the Council and the Department will explore policy barriers, replicate program successes, and discover pressing challenges and opportunities that will support economic prosperity for the farming community and ensure healthy, affordable food for residents. Agriculture is Delaware's top industry, providing 20,000 jobs and \$8 billion of economic activity, including \$1.2 billion in direct sales from 2,500 family farms. Delaware farmers produce a variety of agricultural products on 500,000 acres of farmland, including fruits and vegetables, poultry, corn, wheat, and soybeans.

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For more information on the Delaware Council on Farm and Food Policy, contact Ms. Nikko Brady, DDA Deputy Principal Assistant, 302-698-4503, [DDA\\_FarmandFoodPolicy@delaware.gov](mailto:DDA_FarmandFoodPolicy@delaware.gov)